



Morning Alert - Friday, September 16, 2016

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HEADLINES

Morning news

NHK gave top play to a report that the Tokyo Metropolitan Government will begin an investigation into pools of water found in an underground space beneath the buildings of the new fish market in Toyosu. All commercial networks also led with follow-up reports on the soil and water problems in Toyosu.

Top stories in national dailies included reports on problems related to the construction of the new fish market in Toyosu (Asahi, Sankei); the election of Renho as Democratic Party president (Mainichi); back tax of 12 billion yen charged to Apple's music subsidiary in Japan (Yomiuri); and the results of a survey of managers of 100 major Japanese firms on work-style reform (Nikkei).

INTERNATIONAL

U.S., Japan, ROK to seek total ban on oil exports to North Korea in UNSC resolution

Asahi front-paged a report from Seoul saying that it has learned from several sources that in discussions on a new UN Security Council resolution on North Korea, the U.S., Japan, and South Korea will seek a total ban on crude oil exports to the DPRK and imports of coal and other mineral resources from the nation. The three nations have apparently conveyed the idea to China, which holds the key to the UNSC discussions. The three nations will seek a total ban on mineral imports, which account for about half of the DPRK's exports, in order to cut the nation's foreign currency revenue as much as possible. They will also seek to restrict North Korea from dispatching workers to foreign nations.

Japan, China agree to accelerate discussions on maritime communication mechanism

All papers wrote that senior officials of Japan and China held maritime talks in Hiroshima on Sept. 14-15 and agreed to swiftly resume discussions by defense officials on the early implementation of a “maritime and aerial communication mechanism” between the two nations. However, Tokyo and Beijing failed to agree to resume their suspended talks on joint gas field development in the East China Sea. The two nations agreed to hold the next round of the senior-level talks by the end of this year. According to Mainichi, Japan and China agreed to set up a framework for a dialogue on marine debris at an early date with the goal of conducting joint research in 2017.

Inada cancels trip to South Sudan, takes Osprey flight

Several papers reported on an announcement by the Defense Ministry that Minister Inada has cancelled her planned visit to South Sudan on Sept. 17 due to an allergic reaction to antimalarial medication. In a related development, Tokyo Shimbun ran a Kyodo story saying that Inada flew on an Osprey at a U.S. military base near Washington, D.C., on Thursday.

U.S. presents draft UNSC resolution on ending nuclear tests

Thursday evening's Nikkei wrote from New York that the U.S. government has distributed a draft UN Security Council resolution calling for an end to nuclear testing to all 15 members. The paper speculated that the move is intended to boost momentum for effectuating the Comprehensive Nuclear Test Ban Treaty, adopted by the UN General Assembly 20 years ago, and send a warning to North Korea, which continues to carry out nuclear tests. In the view that the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction is a threat to global peace and security, the draft resolution calls on all nations to maintain a moratorium on nuclear tests involving nuclear explosions and urges nations that have not ratified the treaty to do so without delay. The paper also conjectured that President Obama, who advocates a world without nuclear weapons, hopes to boost momentum for international efforts for nonproliferation by gaining the support of the international community.

This morning's Asahi and Yomiuri also reported on the draft resolution, with Asahi saying that it has been watered down by omitting a sentence indicating legal binding power that was included in the original draft in August. The paper quoted a source connected to the UNSC as speculating that the Obama administration made changes in response to requests from Congress as well as China and Russia.

SECURITY

Two protesters arrested near helipad construction site

Tokyo Shimbun wrote that the Okinawa Police arrested a man and a woman on Thursday on suspicion of disrupting traffic by blocking a prefectural road with their vehicles near the helipad construction site in the Northern Training Area.

SCIENCE

Okinawa forest designated as national park

Thursday evening's Tokyo Shimbun front-paged a report saying that the GOJ officially designated on Thursday a subtropical forest in northern Okinawa as Japan's 33rd national park, Yambaru National Park. Japan is seeking the registration of Ryukyu-Amami as a UNESCO World Heritage site, and the new park is included in the area. The GOJ is aiming to achieve the UNESCO registration at an early date by strengthening measures to protect the area through designating it as a national park. The park covers 13,622 hectares of land and 3,670 hectares of sea, and is located next to the U.S. military's Northern Training Area.

